

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-13

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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CIA

CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

DEPCHUSMACTHAI

USSAG NKP

S E C R E T STATE 027961

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MCAP, EAID, LA

SUBJECT: MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN LAOS

REFS: (A) VIENTIANE 644 (B) VIENTIANE 186 (C) STATE

60000

1. WE AGREE THAT STATE'S 60000 HAS TO SOME EXTENT BEEN
OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS AND THAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GEAR
LOGISTICS REQUIREMENTS TO THE NEW RLGAFF FORCE STRUCTURE AND
THE REDUCED ENEMY THREAT IN NORTH LAOS. AT THE SAME TIME,
THE ESSENTIAL POLICY OBJECTIVE REFLECTED IN STATE'S 60000

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CONTINUES TO BE VALID. WE STILL WISH TO: (A) MAINTAIN

AS STRONG A NON-COMMUNIST MILITARY POSTURE AS POSSIBLE IN LAOS, (B) GIVE SOUVANNA AND FAR EFFECTIVE MILITARY ASSISTANCE DURING THE PRESENT TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WHEN THEY NEED ALL THE BARGAINING LEVERAGE THEY CAN GET, AND (C) AVOID DISMANTLING OUR LOGISTIC AND PERSONNEL STRUCTURE TO THE POINT WHERE IT COULD NOT BE RAPIDLY REINFORCED SHOULD THE ENEMY THREAT SUDDENLY INCREASE. IN SHORT, WE WANT TO GIVE YOU ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TO PREVENT REDUNDANCIES AND WASTE BUT RETAIN THE CAPABILITY TO REACT TO NEW THREATS SHOULD THEY OCCUR. BEYOND THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE WANT TO GUARD AGAINST THE KIND OF UNILATERAL DRAWDOWN OF ASSETS WHICH MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED BY HANOI TO IMPLY THAT WE WERE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LAOS.

2. WITHIN THE FOREGOING GUIDELINES, WE ARE, THEREFORE, PREPARED TO MODIFY STATE'S 60000 AS FOLLOWS:

REGARDING LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS, WE RECOGNIZE NEED TO ACCUSTOM THE LAO ARMED FORCES TO THE MORE AUSTERE SUPPLY SITUATION WHICH WILL RESULT FROM THE TRANSFER FROM MASF TO MAP FOR FY 75. WE ACKNOWLEDGE STORAGE PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM REQUISITIONING AT WARTIME RATES. MISSION IS THEREFORE AUTHORIZED TO MAINTAIN LOGISTICAL LEVELS COMMENSURATE WITH THE APPROVED FY 74 AND FY 75 MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND WITH THE REQUIREMENT TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO ANY RESUMPTION OF COMBAT ACTIVITIES. MISSION IS CAUTIONED IN PARTICULAR NOT TO IMPAIR TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONAL, MAINTENANCE, OR TRAINING CAPABILITY.

3. REGARDING PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO REVIEW CURRENT ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL STRUCTURE AND SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES WHICH YOU BELIEVE WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO MORE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION UNDER CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES IN LAOS. WE WILL LET YOU KNOW OUR REACTION TO YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THEY ARE RECEIVED. KISSINGER

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